

Honesty & Integrity Stories

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Admitting Flaws

In the mid-1980's researchers at Cleveland State University made a startling discovery.

They conducted an experiment by creating two fictitious job candidates David and John. The candidates had identical resumes and letters of reference. The only difference was that John's letter included the sentence "Sometimes, John can be difficult to get along with". They showed the resumes to a number of personnel directors. Which candidate did the personnel directors overwhelmingly prefer? Difficult to get along with, John.

The researchers concluded the criticism of John made praise of John more believable. Admitting John's wart actually helped sell John. Admitting flaws gives you more credibility. A key to selling.

Greatness

"The trouble with the world," said the Master with a sigh, "is that human beings refuse to grow up."

"When can a person be said to have grown up?" asked a disciple.

"On the day he does not need to be lied to about anything."

Anthony de Mello, SJ
"One Minute Wisdom"

Honest Abe

We celebrate Abraham Lincoln's birthday (February 12), and we should. Lincoln was one of the few great men who really was great. Before he became president, Lincoln spent twenty years as an unsuccessful Illinois lawyer -- at least he was unsuccessful in financial terms. But when you measure the good he did, he was very rich indeed. Legends are often untrue, but Lincoln was the real thing. George Washington never chopped down a cherry tree, but Abraham Lincoln was honest. During his years as a lawyer, there were hundreds of documented examples of his honesty and decency.

For example, Lincoln didn't like to charge people much who were as poor as he was. Once a man sent him twenty-five dollars, but Lincoln sent him back ten of it, saying he was being too generous.

He was known at times to convince his clients to settle their issue out of court, saving them a lot of money, and earning himself nothing.

An old woman in dire poverty, the widow of a Revolutionary soldier, was charged \$200 for getting her \$400 pension. Lincoln sued the pension agent and won the case for the old woman. He didn't charge her for his services and, in fact, paid her hotel bill and gave her money to buy a ticket home!

He and his associate once prevented a con man from gaining possession of a tract of land owned by a mentally ill girl. The case took fifteen minutes. Lincoln's associate came to divide up their fee, but Lincoln reprimanded him. His associate argued that the girl's brother had agreed on the fee ahead of time, and he was completely satisfied.

"That may be," said Lincoln, "but I am not satisfied. That money comes out of the pocket of a poor, demented girl; and I would rather starve than swindle her in this manner. You return half the money at least, or I'll not take a cent of it as my share."

He was a fool, perhaps, by certain standards. He didn't have much, and it was his own fault. But he was a good human being by anyone's standards and I'm glad we celebrate his birthday.

Honesty makes you feel good about yourself and creates trust in others. It improves your relationship with yourself and with others. It's not much in fashion these days to talk about the benefits of honesty and decency, but the benefits are there and they are valuable and worth the trouble.

Lincoln didn't talk much about religion, even with his best friends, and he didn't belong to any church. But he once confided to a friend that his religious code was the same as an

old man he knew in Indiana, who said, "When I do good, I feel good, and when I do bad, I feel bad, and that's my religion."

Honesty. It may be corny, but it's the finest force for good in the world, and it always will be.

Do some honest good in the world.

Adam Khan Found at: YouMeWorks.com

You could find the story and any other inspiring stories at Adam Khan's book Self-Help Stuff That Works.

Honest Airman Returns \$9,000

Good guys still exist, and one of them is an airman from the 25th Intelligence Squadron here, who recently returned more than \$9,000 in found money.

Heading home in his car after a late-night training flight, Senior Airman Jason Baxter crossed the intersection of Racetrack Road and Beal Parkway. Although it was midnight, the street was well lit, and Baxter saw what he thought was a book, maybe a Bible, lying in the road.

He said his thought was, "If that was mine, I'd want someone to return it to me," so he stopped to pick it up. The book turned out to be a leather appointment book, with two zippered pockets on the outside. Looking in the first pocket, he found about six dollars and a driver's license. But when he opened the second pocket, he got a surprise.

"There was a big wad of cash - hundred-dollar bills," Baxter said.

Once he arrived home, he counted the money. There was more than \$9,000 cash.

For some, the decision might be difficult. Not so for Baxter. He immediately called the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Department and reported his find.

"That's just the right thing to do," Baxter said. "Integrity is one of the Air Force's core values, and I'm also a Christian."

The sheriff's department sent Deputy William Schinstine to Baxter's residence. Schinstine took Baxter's statement, and Baxter handed the appointment book and cash over to the deputy.

Schinstine was able to locate the owner of the appointment book. Karrie Jo Blakston, 19, and her boyfriend had withdrawn the cash earlier in the day. They were going to use the

money to pay for their wedding, Schinstine said. Blakston had forgotten the appointment book on top of her car and driven away.

Schinstine said Blackston was "elated and thankful that there are still some honest people in the world."

*Senior Airman Jodi L. Jordan
16th Special Operations Wing Public Affairs
Found at: Air Force News, 7 May 1999*

Maintain Your Integrity

A while back, there was a story about Reuben Gonzolas, who was in the final match of his first professional racquetball tournament. He was playing the perennial champion for his first shot at a victory on the pro circuit. At match point in the fifth and final game, Gonzolas made a super "kill shot" into the front corner to win the tournament. The referee called it good, and one of the linemen confirmed the shot was a winner.

But after a moment's hesitation, Gonzolas turned and declared that his shot had skipped into the wall, hitting the floor first. As a result, the serve went to his opponent, who went on to win the match.

Reuben Gonzolas walked off the court; everyone was stunned. The next issue of a leading racquetball magazine featured Gonzolas on its cover. The lead editorial searched and questioned for an explanation for the first ever occurrence on the professional racquetball circuit. Who could ever imagine it in any sport or endeavor? Here was a player with everything officially in his favor, with victory in his grasp, who disqualifies himself at match point and loses.

When asked why he did it, Gonzolas replied, "It was the only thing I could do to maintain my integrity."

*"Heart At Work"
Editor: Jack Canfield and Jacqueline Miller*

Moonlight Ride

Jenny was so happy about the house they had found.
For once in her life 'twas on the right side of town.
She unpacked her things with such great ease.
As she watched her new curtains blow in the breeze.

How wonderful it was to have her own room.
School would be starting, she's have friends over soon.

There'd be sleep-overs, and parties: she was so happy.
It's just the way she wanted her life to be.

On the first day of school, everything went great.
She made new friends and even got a date.
She thought, "I want to be popular and I'm going to be,
Because I just got a date with the star of the team!"

To be known in this school you had to have a clout,
And dating this guy would sure help her out.
There was only one problem stopping her fate.
Her parents had said she was too young to date.

"Well, I just won't tell them the entire truth.
They won't know the difference: what's there to lose?"
Jenny asked to stay with her friends that night.
Her parents frowned but said, "All right."

Excited, she got ready for the big event.
But as she rushed around like she had no sense,
She began to feel guilty about all the lies,
But what's a pizza, a party, and a moonlight ride?

Well the pizza was good, and the party was great,
But the moonlight ride would have to wait.
For Jeff was half drunk by this time.
But he kissed her and said that he was just fine.

Then the room filled with smoke and Jeff took a puff.
Jenny couldn't believe he was smoking that stuff.
Now Jeff was ready to ride to the point,
But only after he'd smoked another joint.

They jumped in the car for the moonlight ride,
Not thinking that he was too drunk to drive.
They finally made it to the point at last,
And Jeff started trying to make a pass.

A pass is not what Jenny wanted at all
(and by a pass, I don't mean playing football).
"Perhaps my parents were right....maybe I am too young.
Boy, how could I ever, ever be so dumb."

With all of her might, she pushed Jeff away:
"Please take me home, I don't want stay."

Jeff cranked up the engine and floored the gas.
In a matter of seconds they were going too fast.

As Jeff drove on in a fit of wild anger,
Jenny knew that her life was in danger.
She begged and pleaded for him to slow down,
But he just got faster as they neared the town.

"Just let me get home!
I'll confess that I lied.
I really went out for a moonlight ride."
Then all of a sudden, she saw a big flash.
"Oh God, Please help us! We're going to crash!"

She doesn't remember the force of impact.
Just that everything all of a sudden went black.
She felt someone remove her from the twisted rubble,
And heard, "Call an ambulance! These kids are in trouble!"

Voices she heard...a few words at best.
But she knew there were two cars involved in the wreck.
Then wondered to herself if Jeff was all right,
And if the people in the other car were alive.

She awoke in the hospital to faces so sad.
"You've been in a wreck and it looks pretty bad."
These voices echoed inside her head,
As they gently told her that Jeff was dead.

They said "Jenny, we've done all we can do.
But it looks as if we'll lose you too."
"But the people in the other car?" Jenny cried.
"We're sorry, Jenny, they also died."

Jenny prayed, "God, forgive me for what I've done.
I only wanted to have just one night of fun."
Tell those people's family, I've made their lives dim,
And wish I could return their families to them."

"Tell Mom and Dad I'm sorry I lied,
And that it's my fault so many have died.
Oh, nurse, won't you please tell them that for me?"
The nurse just stood there-she never agreed.

But took Jenny's hand with tears in her eyes.
And a few moments later Jenny died.

A man asked the nurse, "Why didn't you do you best,
To bid that girl her one last request?"

She looked at the man with eyes oh so sad.
"Because the people in the other car were her mom and dad."
This story is sad and unpleasant but true,
So young people take heed, it could have been you.

Nothing but the Truth!

David Casstevens of the Dallas Morning News tells a story about Frank Szymanski, a Notre Dame center in the 1940s, who had been called as a witness in a civil suit at South Bend.

"Are you on the Notre Dame football team this year?" the judge asked.

"Yes, Your Honor."

"What position?"

"Center, Your Honor."

"How good a center?"

Szymanski squirmed in his seat, but said firmly: "Sir, I'm the best center Notre Dame has ever had."

Coach Frank Leahy, who was in the courtroom, was surprised. Szymanski always had been modest and unassuming. So when the proceedings were over, he took Szymanski aside and asked why he had made such a statement. Szymanski blushed.

"I hated to do it, Coach," he said. "But, after all, I was under oath."

David Casstevens

"Condensed Chicken Soup for the Soul"

Editor: Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen & Patty Hansen

Serious Business

Let me take you back a couple years. Come with me as we relearn a lesson; one that has stuck with me, in my present memory, and inspires me yet. I don't remember exact conversation, but bear with me as I supply something that would sound normal.

We walk into Elida Road Hardware. An old fashioned hardware store. No automatic door, not a computer in the building. Nothing unusual about the day, or the fact that we go to that store. It is one that I go to fairly often. As we enter the door, two sounds greet us. The sleigh bells of yesteryear, the ones that make that sweet, peaceful tinkle as we open the door. The other sound is the electronic beeper that alerts Andy of our presence.

"Good afternoon, Ryan," comes the cheerful acknowledgment. Andy Bianco is a very friendly sort of proprietor. He is of medium build and height, we'll say about 50, and the smile on his face welcomes us.

We walk across the old wood floor -- destitute of stain or varnish, and worn smooth -- with its squeaky spots, and uneven joints. Andy asks us what he can help us with. I tell him we are looking for a spring. He very patiently replies "I carry lots of springs, you're going to need to be more specific."

"Beats me what they're called; just a spring for an old-fashioned screen door."

"That's it. A screen door spring. Right down there." We turn to where he is pointing, and sure enough, there they are. Andy knows his store, and his products. That's why I come here instead of Meijer. The service can't be beat. The price, Yes. But service and satisfaction; No.

I pick up one and follow him to the counter. A keg of peanuts sits beside the counter, and beside it, another for the hulls. Let me know when Lowes does that. Covering the counter is a piece of Plexiglas, and under it, all manner of business cards.

"Hey got a card? Put one under here. Free advertising space."

"Thanks Andy, but I already have one. See, over here."

"Well, I'll be; you do."

He figures up the price, doing the math in his head. "\$1.88, with Uncle Sam's share comes to \$1.99"

"Put it on Pop's account."

He nods and smiles, remembering that this is the third item this week that received that verdict.

"Good ole' Pop's account." He chuckles. "I don't know what you boys would do without Pop's account!"

He hands me the ticket and as I sign it I ask rhetorically, "You really trust my signature?"

His reply startles, yet gladdens me. "When I can't trust Jerry Hoover's boys; I can't trust nobody!"

We leave, and the brain immediately starts to forget things, in order of importance. But what Andy Bianco said that day, rang in my ears. And it rings in my ears today. That's a tall order to live up to. It's a high standard of integrity. My father made a reputation for that name, and I get to enjoy the benefits thereof. But by the same token, I must maintain that reputation. And that's serious business.

Ryan J. A. Hoover

Ryan J. A. Hoover is a 16-year-old boy and lives in N.W. Ohio. His Pop died 3 and a half years ago, from V-fib. (Vetricle Fibrillation.)

The Cherry Tree

When George Washington was about six years old, he was made the wealthy master of a hatchet of which, like most little boys, he was extremely fond. He went about chopping everything that came his way.

One day, as he wandered about the garden amusing himself by hacking his mother's pea-sticks, he found a beautiful, young English cherry tree, of which his father was most proud. He tried the edge of his hatchet on the trunk of the tree and barked it so that it died.

Some time after this, his father discovered what had happened to his favorite tree. He came into the house in great anger, and demanded to know who the mischievous person was who had cut away the bark. Nobody could tell him anything about it.

Just then George, with his little hatchet, came into the room.

"George," said his father, "do you know who has killed my beautiful little cherry tree yonder in the garden? I would not have taken five guineas for it!"

This was a hard question to answer, and for a moment George was staggered by it, but quickly recovering himself he cried: --

"I cannot tell a lie, father, you know I cannot tell a lie! I did cut it with my little hatchet."

The anger died out of his father's face, and taking the boy tenderly in his arms, he said: --

"My son, that you should not be afraid to tell the truth is more to me than a thousand trees! yes, though they were blossomed with silver and had leaves of the purest gold!"

M.L.Weems

"Good Stories for Great Holidays"

Editor: Frances Jenkins Olcott

The Courage of His Convictions

ABE LINCOLN made the great speech of his famous senatorial campaign at Springfield, Illinois. The convention before which he spoke consisted of a thousand delegates together with the crowd that had gathered with them.

His speech was carefully prepared. Every sentence was guarded and emphatic. It has since become famous as "The Divided House" speech. Before entering the hall where it was to be delivered, he stepped into the office of his law- partner, Mr. Herndon, and, locking the door, so that their interview might be private, took his manuscript from his pocket, and read one of the opening sentences: "I believe this government cannot endure permanently, half slave and half free."

Mr. Herndon remarked that the sentiment was true, but suggested that it might not be good policy to utter it at that time.

Mr. Lincoln replied with great firmness: "No matter about the policy. It is true, and the nation is entitled to it. The proposition has been true for six thousand years, and I will deliver it as it is written."

"Good Stories for Great Holidays"

Editor: Frances Jenkins Olcott

The Emperor's Seed

Once there was an emperor in the Far East who was growing old and knew it was coming time to choose his successor. Instead of choosing one of his assistants or one of his own children, he decided to do something different.

He called all the young people in the kingdom together one day. He said, "It has come time for me to step down and to choose the next emperor. I have decided to choose one of you." The kids were shocked! But the emperor continued. "I am going to give each one of you a seed today. One seed. It is a very special seed. I want you to go home, plant the seed, water it and come back here one year from today with what you have grown from this one seed. I will then judge the plants that you bring to me, and the one I choose will be the next emperor of the kingdom!"

There was one boy named Ling who was there that day and he, like the others, received a seed. He went home and excitedly told his mother the whole story. She helped him get a

pot and some planting soil, and he planted the seed and watered it carefully. Every day he would water it and watch to see if it had grown.

After about three weeks, some of the other youths began to talk about their seeds and the plants that were beginning to grow. Ling kept going home and checking his seed, but nothing ever grew. Three weeks, four weeks, five weeks went by. Still nothing.

By now others were talking about their plants but Ling didn't have a plant, and he felt like a failure. Six months went by, still nothing in Ling's pot. He just knew he had killed his seed. Everyone else had trees and tall plants, but he had nothing. Ling didn't say anything to his friends, however. He just kept waiting for his seed to grow.

A year finally went by and all the youths of the kingdom brought their plants to the emperor for inspection. Ling told his mother that he wasn't going to take an empty pot. But she encouraged him to go, and to take his pot, and to be honest about what happened. Ling felt sick to his stomach, but he knew his mother was right. He took his empty pot to the palace.

When Ling arrived, he was amazed at the variety of plants grown by all the other youths. They were beautiful, in all shapes and sizes. Ling put his empty pot on the floor and many of the other kinds laughed at him. A few felt sorry for him and just said, "Hey nice try."

When the emperor arrived, he surveyed the room and greeted the young people. Ling just tried to hide in the back. "My, what great plants, trees and flowers you have grown," said the emperor. "Today, one of you will be appointed the next emperor!"

All of a sudden, the emperor spotted Ling at the back of the room with his empty pot. He ordered his guards to bring him to the front. Ling was terrified. "The emperor knows I'm a failure! Maybe he will have me killed!"

When Ling got to the front, the Emperor asked his name. "My name is Ling," he replied. All the kids were laughing and making fun of him. The emperor asked everyone to quiet down. He looked at Ling, and then announced to the crowd, "Behold your new emperor! His name is Ling!" Ling couldn't believe it. Ling couldn't even grow his seed. How could he be the new emperor?

Then the emperor said, "One year ago today, I gave everyone here a seed. I told you to take the seed, plant it, water it, and bring it back to me today. But I gave you all boiled seeds which would not grow. All of you, except Ling, have brought me trees and plants and flowers. When you found that the seed would not grow, you substituted another seed for the one I gave you. Ling was the only one with the courage and honesty to bring me a pot with my seed in it. Therefore, he is the one who will be the new emperor!"

Author Unknown

The Goat and the Goatherd

A Goatherd had sought to bring back a stray goat to his flock. He whistled and sounded his horn in vain; the straggler paid no attention to the summons. At last the Goatherd threw a stone, and breaking its horn, begged the Goat not to tell his master. The Goat replied, "Why, you silly fellow, the horn will speak though I be silent."

Do not attempt to hide things which cannot be hid. *Aesop's Fables*

What You Are Is As Important As What You Do

It was a sunny Saturday afternoon in Oklahoma City. My friend and proud father Bobby Lewis was taking his two little boys to play miniature golf. He walked up to the fellow at the ticket counter and said, "How much is it to get in?"

The young man replied, "\$3.00 for you and \$3.00 for any kid who is older than six. We let them in free if they are six or younger. How old are they?"

Bobby replied, "The lawyer's three and the doctor is seven, so I guess I owe you \$6.00."

The man at the ticket counter said, "Hey, Mister, did you just win the lottery or something? You could have saved yourself three bucks. You could have told me that the older one was six; I wouldn't have known the difference." Bobby replied, "Yes, that may be true, but the kids would have known the difference."

As Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "Who you are speaks so loudly I can't hear what you're saying." In challenging times when ethics are more important than ever before, make sure you set a good example for everyone you work and live with.

Patricia Fripp

"Chicken Soup for the Soul"

Editor: Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hansen

Why Lincoln Was Called 'Honest Abe'

In managing the country store, as in everything that he undertook for others, Lincoln did his very best. He was honest, civil, ready to do anything that should encourage customers to come to the place, full of pleasantries, patient, and alert.

On one occasion, finding late at night, when he counted over his cash, that he had taken a few cents from a customer more than was due, he closed the store, and walked a long distance to make good the deficiency.

At another time, discovering on the scales in the morning a weight with which he had weighed out a package of tea for a woman the night before, he saw that he had given her too little for her money. He weighed out what was due, and carried it to her, much to the surprise of the woman, who had not known that she was short in the amount of her purchase.

Innumerable incidents of this sort are related of Lincoln, and we should not have space to tell of the alertness with which he sprang to protect defenseless women from insult, or feeble children from tyranny; for in the rude community in which he lived, the rights of the defenseless were not always respected as they should have been. There were bullies then, as now.

Noah Brooks

"Good Stories for Great Holidays"

Editor: Frances Jenkins Olcott

Winners and Winners

As a high school coach, I did all I could to help my boys win their games. I rooted as hard for victory as they did.

A dramatic incident, however, following a game in which I officiated as a referee, changed my perspective on victories and defeats. I was refereeing a league championship basketball game in New Rochelle, New York, between New Rochelle and Yonkers High.

New Rochelle was coached by Dan O'Brien, Yonkers by Les Beck. The gym was crowded to capacity, and the volume of noise made it impossible to hear. The game was well played and closely contested. Yonkers was leading by one point as I glanced at the clock and discovered there were but 30 seconds left to play.

Yonkers, in possession of the ball, passed off - shot - missed. New Rochelle recovered - pushed the ball up court - shot. The ball rolled tantalizingly around the rim and off. The fans shrieked.

New Rochelle, the home team, recovered the ball, and tapped it in for what looked like victory. The tumult was deafening. I glanced at the clock and saw that the game was over. I hadn't heard the final buzzer because of the noise. I checked with the other official, but he could not help me.

Still seeking help in this bedlam, I approached the timekeeper, a young man of 17 or so. He said, "Mr. Covino, the buzzer went off as the ball rolled off the rim, before the final tap-in was made."

I was in the unenviable position of having to tell Coach O'Brien the sad news. "Dan," I said, "time ran out before the final basket was tapped in. Yonkers won the game."

His face clouded over. The young timekeeper came up. He said, "I'm sorry, Dad. The time ran out before the final basket."

Suddenly, like the sun coming out from behind a cloud, Coach O'Brien's face lit up. He said, "That's okay, Joe. You did what you had to do. I'm proud of you."

Turning to me, he said, "Al, I want you to meet my son, Joe."

The two of them then walked off the court together, the coach's arm around his son's shoulder.

Al Covino

"A 4th Course of Chicken Soup for the Soul"

Editor: Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen, Hanoch McCarty & Meladee McCarty

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